British Waterways London

Autumn/Winter 2008

TOURISM AFLOAT

LEISURE NEWS FOR WATERSIDE BUSINESSES

GROWING NUMBERS ATTRACTED TO THE WATERWAYS

Canalway Cavalcade held annually at Little Venice, is one of the many events British Waterways London is involved in.

This year British Waterways' annual report revealed record leisure usage of the waterways. The number of boats on the waterways has risen in the last year to more than 31,000 and is greater even than at the height of the industrial revolution. In the same period there was a 13% rise in members of the public using the towpaths with 11 million people visiting for a range of activities including angling, cycling, walking, going to a waterside pub or simply to feed the ducks.

Our surveys revealed 87% of the population agreed that canals are 'good places to look around'. We also saw an increase of 20% on last year's (1.5 million) visits to British Waterways' leisure consumers website, waterscape.com.

Commenting on the annual report Robin Evans, British Waterways' chief executive, said: "The waterways today are being used and enjoyed in ways that few people could have imagined when they were built 250 years ago, or even when they were nationalised 60 years ago. The leisure use of the canals has been central to their revival but it is the adaptability of the network including the ways in which it remains relevant to canalside communities which hold the key to a prosperous future."

EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to British Waterways 2008's Autumn/Winter edition of Tourism Afloat. As the summer rapidly draws to a close, in this issue we look back at the highlights of the past six months, celebrate rising visitor numbers to the waterways and see what's been happening in and around the waterways.

This summer record visitor numbers, combined with many successful waterside community events, have helped to support waterside businesses. New waterside ventures alongside long established businesses are a vital part of the unique character of London's canals and rivers, and in this edition we introduce two new waterway entrepreneurs. We also find out more about the London charity Thames21 and reveal our plans for 'Yours to Enjoy' in 2009. Enjoy!

In London 350,000 people use one of London's waterways at least once every week compared to 260,000 people over the same period in 2007. Some will visit only once, some will visit every day depending on whether people are using the waterways for leisure or entertainment, commuting or business.

See more over the page about our 2009 strategy to encourage more visitors to London's waterways.

YOURS TO ENJOY ANYTIME CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Thank you to all the waterside businesses who contributed to the success of the 'Yours to enjoy anytime' campaign in London this year. With your help we have contributed to an 18% rise in footfall at waterways across the country.

Launched in Autumn 2007, this, British Waterways' first national marketing initiative, uses vibrant new imagery, an innovative marketing mix and targeted messaging to identify the waterways as valuable resources on our doorsteps and highlight the many different ways they can be enjoyed -anytime! We localised the campaign with a focus on the central London stretch of the Regent's Canal – from Little Venice to King's Cross, and the East London Loop made up of the Regent's and Hertford Union canals. In these areas we:

- Produced three eye-catching fold-out leaflets highlighting activities and attractions around the waterway.

- Distributed fold-outs to partner organisations, distribution points and to over 250,000 households in the focus areas.
- Produced the 'Yours to taste' event in East London which brought thousands of people to the waterway and venues around it.
- Supported marketing initiatives with full page ads in local newspapers, on-street hand-out sessions and billboard advertising.
- Delivered online activity with dedicated 'Yours to enjoy anytime' web pages and e-mailing campaign.
- Promoted the campaign at waterway events across the capital.
- Matched and supported marketing initiatives with collaborative press and PR activities which generated over £10,000 worth of coverage.

The Hanwell Flight, a scheduled monument, is part of our 2009 destination in West London.

In the year ahead we will be continuing to focus on the East London Loop where, by building on successful penetration so far, we can expect to see significant returns. Our second key destination in 2008/09, will be in West London, along the Grand Union Main Line including Brentford and The Hanwell Flight. This picturesque and historic stretch is home to many significant local sights, attractions and waterside activities. We are looking forward to working with waterside businesses in these areas and across the capital to deliver this, the third phase of the 'Yours to enjoy anytime' campaign.

If you have any ideas or suggestions on ways we could use the 'Yours to enjoy anytime' campaign to support your work, or would like more information on how you can get involved, please do not hesitate to get in touch with

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TOWPATH RANGER RIDES INTO TOWN

British Waterways, in partnership with Transport for London, has employed London's first towpath ranger to help the many visitors to the capital's canals enjoy the waterways safely, and encourage users to think of each other as they travel.

The new post has been created to help combat the conflict occuring on the towpath between speeding cyclists and pedestrians.

The new ranger, Joe Young (pictured), will be on-hand to remind both sets of waterway visitors about the towpath code of conduct by promoting the Two-Tings campaign, and encourage more understanding between the two groups as they travel along the traffic-free towpaths of central London.

Since January 2008 alone, more than ten incidents involving cyclists crashing into pedestrians at speed have been reported to British Waterways, prompting the move to employ the new ranger.

Joe, himself an avid cyclist and volunteer Sustrans ranger, is keen to encourage cyclists and pedestrians to share the towpath amicably. He said:

"Speeding cyclists are giving other riders a bad name so part of my role will be to educate these few and encourage other users to share the towpath amicably.

"The narrow towpaths, designed for a completely different use over 200 years ago, aren't really the place to travel at top speeds.

"The canals are a green route through the city, steeped in industrial heritage and a haven for wildlife. It's a far more pleasant journey if you take all that in as you go."

British Waterways' Towpath Ranger, Joe Young, will be spending 75% of his time out and about on the Regent's Canal, helping visitors enjoy the canal safely.

HARLOW'S SCULPTURE TRAIL OPENS

A sculpture trail celebrating Harlow's waterside heritage was officially opened on 25 September by Harlow Council and British Waterways at Parndon Mill.

Four freestanding sculptures and a glass and metal walkway form the three-and-a-half mile waterside trail along the River Stort linking Parndon Mill to the Gibberd Garden in Harlow.

The sculptures are situated at Parndon Lock, Burnt Mill Lock, Latton Lock and Harlow Lock along the River Stort, whilst the raised glass and metal walkway spans the weir at Parndon Mill.

The opening ceremony of Harlow's sculpture trail at Parndon Mill, from left to right - Simon Bamford, General Manager for British Waterways London, Alan Freeman, Artist, Karen Murphy, Artist and Councillor Edna Stevens, Harlow Council.

Simon Bamford, General Manager for British Waterways London said:

"It's great to see Harlow's waterway heritage being celebrated for all to see. The sculptures along the trail add a real element of surprise to a waterside walk; each one has a story to tell about the local area. We hope that walkers, cyclists, boaters and art lovers alike will admire these creations alongside the natural beauty of the area."

The project has been funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government Growth Area Funds and Harlow Council. The project partners include Harlow Council, British Waterways and Parndon Mill.

OLIEKOP'S FLOATING THAI EXPERIENCE

A new and innovative Thai takeaway experience has joined the waterways on the Regent's Canal. Oliekop, a dutch barge originally built in 1927 to deliver oil along the canals, offers market goers and passers-by delicious Thai cuisine every Saturday at Broadway Market. The floating Thai cuisine was also in popular demand at British Waterways' recent 'Yours to taste' event held in late August.

This is a unique partnership between an historic canal-side venture, a new local business and a converted working barge. British Waterways London is delighted by this new, innovative business and its support in making the waterways an enjoyable experience for as many people as possible.

Business entrepreneur on Oliekop, Catherine O'Shea said:
"In partnership with Project A, a new canal-side Thai Restaurant, we are proposing to reinvent the historic relationship between the waterways and Broadway Market in a unique, contemporary, enjoyable (and delicious!) way."

The food is award winning, with Project A recently taking 2008's title of 'Best Thai Restaurant in London' at the Archant London Food and Drink Awards.

Make sure you head down one Saturday to Broadway Market and visit Oliekop to taste the award winning food. For more information about Oliekop please contact Catherine O'Shea at cos@theboat.org.uk

Oliekop adds flare to Broadway Market and the waterway with the award winning Thai food takeaway.

KAYAKING CANAL CABBIES

What's the business?

London's first paddle powered water taxi on the Regent's and Grand Union canals, offering short trips and tailored tours aboard canoes and kayaks to visitors, locals and waterway enthusiasts alike.

Who is running it?

Danny Gillard and Niamh Walsh are co-founders of Thames River Adventures Limited and fully qualified canoe instructors. Running several successful trips on the River Thames, this summer the couple expanded their network of tours to include the canals of the capital – with the sunrise tour of the Regent's Canal the most popular so far.

Danny Gillard at Little Venice Pool with one of his paddle powered taxis, aka a kayak.

Why choose London's canal network?

Danny Gillard: "The canal system in London is a real hidden gem, there's fantastic architecture, unusual views of the city and a wealth of wildlife – making for a great kayak tour."

Plans for the future?

Danny said: "If the kayak service goes well, we have plans to design our very own gondola to add to our fleet of boats suitable for the inland waterways."

To find out more visit www.thamesriveradventures.co.uk

ENFORCEMENT IMPROVES ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

With over 31,000 boats on our waterways – more than in their industrial hey-day, and leisure boating increasing in popularity every year, managing the waterspace and keeping it attractive and accessible for boaters and other users alike is a key aspect of British Waterways London's work. We also rely on the valuable income-stream generated through licensing boats and leasing moorings to maintain the canals and rivers themselves as well as the complex infrastructure that keeps them operational.

While the vast majority of boaters create much appreciated colour and character on the waterways, British Waterways London dedicates significant resources each year to addressing the problems created by derelict and abandoned boats and licence evaders. Our patrol officers work hard to support boaters who have difficulty meeting British Waterways requirements, however, when all other options are exhausted, boats must be removed from the water and are either sold or destroyed.

This year, having been identified in the annual November boat check, 27 boats were removed from London's waterways. This action has improved the look and feel of the local waterway and freed up British Waterways' people to work with other customers across the network. We hope our activities in this area have a positive impact for businesses and leisure users across the waterside community and improve the environment around our canals and rivers for everyone to enjoy.

One of the boats removed on the River Lee Navigation earlier this year.

VOLUNTEERS ALONG OUR WATERWAYS

British Waterways has commended volunteers for their work to help maintain and care for the London waterway network. The hard work, undertaken by Canalkeepers and Thames21, has been recognised as part of a celebration of the diversity and importance of the volunteering that takes place across the country's canals and rivers.

Thames21 is an environmental charity working with communities to bring London's waterways to life. Thames21 mobilise thousands of volunteers every year to clean up waterside grot-spots, remove graffiti and create new habitats for wildlife. The charity also engages with children and young people. Thames21 organises activities such as angling days, which encourage youngsters to learn more about their local environment and respect the wildlife that inhabit the canals and rivers.

Canalkeepers is a scheme developed by Thames21 and supported by British Waterways. The five Canalkeepers who have 'adopted' the Slough Arm as their patch, provide an invaluable service to British Waterways and the local community. As Canalkeepers the group champion their stretch of waterway, liaising with the local council, clearing litter and cutting back vegetation, as well as reporting problems and issues to British Waterways. This is a dedicated group of volunteers whose actions have made a great difference to the area.

Last year British Waterways was involved with volunteer-led projects that contributed over 8,000 volunteer days to the promotion and upkeep of the waterways worth in excess of £400,000.

If you would like to get involved in any of the volunteering days or would like any more information, contact Thames21 on 020 7248 7171 or visit www.thames21.org.uk

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

Over the past few months the unique charm of the capital's canals and rivers, the people who use and enjoy them, and those who work on and along them, have inspired a wealth of coverage in the newspapers, online, over the airwaves and on television.

Below is a selection of what's been reported, where and when.

The communications team in London aim to promote the waterways to a variety of audiences, encouraging more people to visit the canals and rivers.

We are always looking for unusual activities, interesting people and creative case studies to help bring the waterways to life and explain their relevance to the media. If you would like to get involved and are happy to talk to the media about what you do, then please get in touch with Gill Owen, Communications Manager, British Waterways London, e: gill.owen@britishwaterways.co.uk t: 0207 985 7227.

Sunday 7 September

The Sunday Times

How to paddle through London

It's therapy, but not as you know it. Kayaking in the capital is good for the soul.

…There is, though, one place, at one time, where there is no noise. Not a squeak. And to hear it - or, more accurately, not to hear it - you need to get yourself to the Regent's Canal at 5.54am.

There you will find Danny Gillard and Niamh Walsh, who will stick you in a kayak, where you can rest your paddle on your lap and gently bob on the water while the sound of London doing absolutely nothing wraps itself around you like a giant in a woolly sweater with his thumbs in your ears.

And as you drift soporifically along, you think to yourself that this is the first time for about a month your heartbeat has dropped below 120bpm and you've experienced real, genuine peace…

Thursday 3 July

Thelondonpaper

Restaurant cools down Londoners this summer with scoops of canal flavoured ice cream

…an eco-restaurant is planning to cool down Londoners this summer by serving up refreshing scoops of canal flavour ice cream.

British Waterways has teamed up with award-winning restaurant The Waterhouse, run by Britain's greenest chef Arthur Potts Dawson, to create the bizarre taste in honour of Carlo Gatti, London's first ice cream man who famously cut ice from the Regent's Canal to make ice cream in the 1800s…

Thursday 2 October

The Evening Standard

Lone ranger will bring peace to the canals

The capital's first canal towpath ranger has been appointed amid tension between cyclists and walkers. Joseph Young will patrol the waterside to help avert conflict.

The number of towpath users has boomed, with more than 34 million visits made to London's canals and rivers last year...

Thursday 29 August

TimeOut

Explore your local canal

British Waterways has organised a fun-packed day on the Regent's Canal this Sunday from 12noon…

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LEISURE ACTIVITIES AROUND LONDON'S WATERWAYS VISIT

waterscape.com

British Waterways' leisure website highlights more refreshing ways to get out and about in the capital around London's canals and rivers. For information on content and listings on waterscape.com or links to the site contact British Waterways' London team on 020 7985 7205 or enquiries@britishwaterways.co.uk

CONTACT

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